# Newsletter for Birdwatchers

Vol. 47 No. 6. November - December 2007

Seasons Greetings
& Best Wishes for a
Happy & Prosperous
New Year 2008

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**Vol. 47 No. 6 Nov -December 2007**

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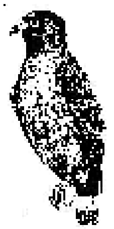

**Publisher** : S. Sridhar

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## Note from the Publisher

*Dear fellow Birdwatchers,*

### Anomalous behaviour of male Purple Sunbirds

In this issue we have published an article on Purple Sunbirds by Abhijit Mazumdar, who maintains that the male Purple Sunbird did not take any active role in feeding its chicks at nest. This is quite an anomaly. Many earlier researchers have confirmed that the male Purple Sunbirds take an active role in feeding the chicks at nest. As a matter of fact, I had the privilege of presenting my findings of the breeding behavior of Purple Sunbirds, at the National Seminar organized by the Ethological Society of India, way back in 1981.These findings were based on my observations of half a dozen nests of purple sunbirds along with Dr. B.K. Chakrapani, at various locations in Bangalore. Our observations were in agreement with the long standing convention that male sunbirds do partake in feeding their chicks at nest. We have also videographed the male purple sunbird feeding its chicks at nest. Dr. Salim Ali and Sir Dillon Ripley have confirmed this aspect in the Compact Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan;- "the female alone collects and builds nest, some times accompanied to and fro by male; exceptionally male may also help; incubation starting by female alone. Feeding of nestlings and sanitation by both parents though in some cases the latter chore apparently done by female only. "

Mr. Mazumdar's article is based on the breeding behavioural studies at New Delhi. Incidentally, some fifty years ago, the Right Honorable Malcolm John MacDonald (August 17, 1901 – January 11, 1981) a British politician and diplomat, and the son of British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, had also studied the breeding behaviour of Purple Sunbirds at nest in his garden at New Delhi. He was for seven years Commissioner General for South East Asia and United Kingdom High Commissioner in India from 1955 to 1960. His book "Bird in my Indian Garden" became a very popular number among the Indian birdwatchers. The book is handsomely illustrated with 98 Photographs by Mrs. Christina Loke. The photographic plate between page nos 32 and 33 depicts a male sunbird approaching the nest to feed its chicks.

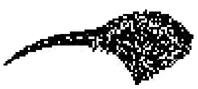
He was an avid birder which is revealed from his account of the Purple Sunbirds "And as I watch them flitting through the shrubberies I think of them as small Black Princes …On April 13th (1958), I noticed the first sign that two sunbirds were inclined to produce a family, when a hen bird displayed her charms to a cock. She tilted her tail in the air, flirted her wings suggestively and gazed at him with dumb, sexy appeal. He appeared to take no notice on that occasion, but must have responded later; for on April 21st I saw her building a nest." In the Foreword, MacDonald mentions that "About one-third of the pictures shown here were taken in may garden in Delhi, and the birds in these are the actual characters who perform in the pages of the book. The photograph of a White eye following page 126 was taken with Mr. Nehru's friendly permission in his garden, where the little bird sat hatching her two eggs while the Prime Minister sat in his study a hundred yards away conducting the highest affairs of the state". Macdonald watched birds in his garden at No 2, King George's Avenue, New Delhi, through the years 1957, 58 and 59. In his Foreword, Macdonald concludes with the remark "It is a glimpse of a tiny nature reserve in the middle of India's great capital; and I have written only the minimum description of various species that seemed necessary, assuming that readers who are sufficiently interested will refer for additional information to more erudite authors."

Conventional wisdom holds that among many bird species, females may choose males because of the resources they are defending. Even where a male does not contribute to the rearing of the young by feeding them, the male may nevertheless aid their survival by defending the nest against predators and intruders of the same species.

Mazumdar's observations are quite interesting and one wonders if it is to be treated as an exception. But if more such reports trickle in, ornithologists may have to reexamine the facts drawn from a host of sources, rearrange the sequence of actions, and move across a broad front to spell out an alternative scenario contradicting the established logic on Sunbird behavior. But doubts may plague other ornithologists, who might prefer to demur at the suggestion that male Sunbirds have no chick rearing duties.

Even as we ponder over such speculative issues, NLBW has come of age as it has been able to create a forum for ornithological debates that represent divergent views. In essence, NLBW has been demonstrating that it is possible to nurture vibrant opinions even in the midst of plural voices from every nook and corner of the country and even beyond.

Thanking you,
Yours in Bird Conservation,
S. Sridhar, *Publisher, NLBW.*



# Heronries in Vidarbha, Maharashtra

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**Introduction**

In this paper we present data on 17 heronries in Vidarbha, Maharashtra. These heronries were actually visited by us between Jan 2000 and July 2007. The species found nesting in the heronries include: Asian Openbills (*Anastomus oscitans*), Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax) (NH*), Indian Pond Herons (*Ardeola grayii) (PH*), Indian Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis) (IC*), Little Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax niger*), Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*), Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) and Intermediate Egrets (*Mesophoyx intermedia*).

There might be many more unexplored heronries in Vidarbha and we are actively searching for them. Hence this list is not comprehensive. However, these heronries have not been reported earlier (D'Abreu, 1923, 1935; Kasambe & Wadatkar, 2003, 2007; Sawarkar, 1987).

## HERONRY IN GONDIA DISTRICT:

### Chorakhmara Heronry :

Mr. Vilas Bardekar, Conservator of Forests, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary (NWS) informed the authors of a heronry of Asian Openbills (*Anastomus oscitans*) on an island in Chorakhmara reservoir in Gondia district. He had visited the heronry on 16th September 2002 with Mr. Kiran Purandare, an avid birdwatcher. After a week Dr. Anil Pimplapure and Mr. Gopal Thosar visited Chorakhmara heronry and counted more than 150 nests of Asian Openbills. Each nest had 2 or 3 chicks. The chicks were in various phases of development; some with white feathers and some with immature plumage.

The nests were prominently on Umbar (*Ficus glomerata*), Katesawar (*Bombax malabarica*), Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*) and Mowai trees (*Lannea coromandelica*). Chorakhmara reservoir is on the fringe of NWS in Gondia district. Mr. Rajkamal Job, another keen birdwatcher from Bhandara informed us that in June 2006, there were more than 100 nests of Asian Openbills in the heronry. The geographical location of NWS is $21^{0}$18'46''N and $80^{0}$04'03''E.

## HERONRIES IN NAGPUR DISTRICT:

### 1. Central Jail Heronry, Nagpur:

This heronry was found on 14th April 2006 (RK) in the heart of Nagpur city in the premises of the Central Jail on Wardha road. It was like a birder's paradise in the heart of the city! There were nests of Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Indian Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*). The geographical location of Nagpur is $21^{0}$07'N and $79^{0}$04'E. It was difficult for me to count the nests all by myself.

On 16th April 2006, we visited the heronry along with birders, Dr. Tarique Sani (of nagpurbirds.org), Mr. Parag Sawji and Mr. Shailendra Chaudhary. We found a dead chick of Black-crowned Night Heron hanging from a Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) tree branch. A live chick of Black-crowned Night Heron was found below a Chichbilai (*Pithecolobium dulce*) tree. We placed it on a low branch and the chick quickly clambered up the branches.

There is an old roost of around 200 Large Fruit-eating Bats here. The nesting birds had encounters with the bats in the evening. But the bats kept to the large *Wad* or Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*) tree most of the time.

On 30th April 2006 again we visited the heronry with Mr. M. S. R. Shaad and found 32 nests of Indian Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*) and 33 nests of Black-crowned Night Herons on one Tamarind tree. The girth of this tree was 114 inches. We counted five dead fishes below the nests.

The second Tamarind tree had 24 nests of Black-crowned Night Herons all above 40 feet from the ground. The girth of this tree was 93 inches.

The third Tamarind tree had a total of 62 nests of Black-crowned Night Herons and Indian Cormorants.

The fourth Tamarind tree had 14 nests of Black-crowned Night Herons at lower heights and 30 nests of Indian Cormorants in the top canopy.

**Nest count on other trees was as:**

1. Subabul tree (*Leucaena leucocephala*): One nest of Black-crowned Night Herons.
2. Peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*): 20 nests of Indian Cormorants.
3. Chichbilai (*Pithecolobium dulce*): 15 nests of Indian Cormorants.
4. Shirish tree (*Albizia lebbeck*): 12 nests of Indian Cormorants.

Some Black-crowned Night Heron chicks had fledged and were flying around clumsily. We could mark three chicks in a nest, which were as big as the adults and seemed ready to fledge. Surprisingly these four trees are on Wardha highway!

Indian Cormorant chicks in all the nests were very young. We counted two chicks each in two nests and three chicks each in two nests. The chicks swayed their heads in harmony and fluttered their wings vigorously. Adults of both species were seen feeding the chicks. On 15th June 2006, I (RK) visited the site again. I counted 26 fledged chicks flying around the nest trees.

**"Paradise Lost!"**

In 2007, the fishing contract for the four small tanks in the Central Jail campus was given to some fishermen. It resulted in the continuous disturbance and chaos at the site. On 11th March 2007 we saw three pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons sitting in half constructed nests on Chichbilai (*Pithecolobium dulce*) trees. On 14th we saw 14-15 Black-crowned Night Herons in the area. Sadly, the activity stopped and the birds disappeared. Now there is not a single nest here. All the birds have left. The bird paradise in the heart of Nagpur is lost!

### 2. Model Mill Heronry, Nagpur: Paradise Found!

Model Mill in Nagpur city is closed since 2003 due to some problems. We were concerned about the missing Black-crowned Night Herons from the Central Jail premises. We followed the movements of the herons and (RK) found them to be shuttling in and out of the Model Mill. On 22nd July 2007 a count of the nests was taken (RK). In all there were 70 nests of Black-crowned Night Herons on 67 Subabul (*Leucaena leucocephala*) trees. One Subabul tree had a nest of Indian Cormorant with one visible chick. Many nests had chicks which were as big as the adults. Many fledglings were seen flying around. There is a small cement tank in the premises of the Mill with lots of fish. Here some 25 Indian Cormorant fledglings and a few adults were seen fishing.

### 3. Empress Mill Heronry, Nagpur:

This heronry was found on 20th April 2006 (RK) by following the movements of Black-crowned Night Herons, Indian Pond Herons (*Ardeola grayii*) and Indian Cormorants towards the area, in Nagpur city. However the security guards of the Mill did not allow me to enter the premises of the long closed textile mill. Therefore I went around the Textile Mill compound to get some glimpses of nests. One pair of Indian Pond Herons with red legs was seen on a nest. A few nests of Little Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax niger*) were seen on the fringe trees.

A visit to this heronry again on 6th June 2006 (RK) revealed (from outside) many nests of Little Cormorants as also of Indian Pond Herons and Black-crowned Night Herons. The latter two species were seen bringing nesting materials.

On 21st July 2006, one of us (RK) managed to enter the Mill premises. The nests were counted. The approximate number of nests were: Black-crowned Night Herons (75), Little Cormorants (93), Indian Cormorants (8), Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) (25) and Indian Pond Herons (30) on various trees. In all there were more than 230 nests. But RK could not cover the entire premises though he could see many more nests, as he was not allowed to go far.

Three chicks of Black-crowned Night Herons were seen running on the ground. Most of the Black-crowned Night Heron chicks seemed ready to fledge. Two adult Black-crowned Night Herons with white crest were seen near most of the nests.

There is a big question mark over the future of this heronry, as Gandhisagar Lake from where the birds procure fish is likely to be reclaimed. One of the plots of the Empress Mills opposite to this lake has been sold and a mega residential project called Empress City is coming up.

RK visited this heronry on 22nd July 2007 and counted the nests. The nest counts were:

a. *Saraca indica* trees: 223 nests of NH (no. of trees=24), 14 nests of PH (t=3),
b. *Ficus religiosa* trees: 10 nests of PH (t=2), 3 nests of NH (t=2).
c. *Polyalthia longifolia* trees: 12 nests of PH (t=8), 16 nests of NH (t=5), 2 nests of IC (t=1), 4 unidentified nests (t=3).
d. *Pithecolobium dulce* tree: 2 nests of PH (t=1)
e. *Millingtonia hortensis* tree: 2 nests of PH (t=1), 12 nests of NH (t=2) and 6 nests of IC (t=2).
f. *Leucaena leucocephala* tree: One nest of PH, 3 nests of NH (t=3).
g. *Melia azadirachta* tree: 28 nests of NH (t=2).
h. *Ficus religiosa tree:* 4 nests of NH (t=1).
i. *Ficus glomerata* tree: Two nests of NH (t=1).

Total number of nests were NH= 287, PH=41, IC=8, Unidentified species=4 nests.

### 4. Khaparkheda Heronry, District Nagpur:

RK found this heronry on 26th May 2006 in the Bhanegaon Abadi area of Khaparkheda village, north of Nagpur. RK visited the heronry again along with Dr. Ravi Waikar and Ms. Ashwini Waikar (a young birder) on 28th May 2006. The heronry is located on two roadside Tamarind trees (*Tamarindus indica*). On one tree there were two nests of Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) and 62 nests of Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*). The other tree had two nests of Little Egrets and 32 nests of Cattle Egrets. All nests were at heights ranging from 25 to 40 feet above ground. The Little Egrets were displaying their beautiful plumes.

### 5. Pardi Heronry, Nagpur:

RK found this heronry in Pardi village near the busy Bhandara road at the eastern end of Nagpur city on 17th July 2006. This heronry was on a single Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) tree. There were around 40 nests of Cattle Egrets on the tree at a height of around 30 to 40 feet above ground.

RK again visited this heronry on 10th July 2007. The heronry had shifted to two adjacent trees which could not be identified by him. There were at least 2 nests of Indian Pond Herons and 26 nests of Cattle Egrets. Both species were bringing nesting materials.

### 6. Kapshi (Khurd) Heronry, District Nagpur:

A heronry was found at Kapshi (Khurd) village near Pardi on Bhadara road, in Nagpur district in June 2006. There were around 150 nests of Cattle Egrets on six Tamarind trees near the Gram Panchayat office. On 17th July 2006, RK found 2 dead chicks and around 50 eggshells below the six trees.

On 10th July 2007 RK counted the nests. There were 95 nests on six Tamarind trees. 46 eggshells were found scattered below the trees.

### 7. Heronry near Pili River on the Jabalpur Highway, Nagpur:

RK found this heronry in July 2005. There were around 55 nests on a single Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) on Jabalpur highway near Pili river in Nagpur district. He again visited the heronry with Dr. Tarique Sani and found three dead frogs below the tree. The tree started to die before the chicks could fledge. Fortunately most of the chicks fledged. Some chicks were collected from the dying tree by a poacher. There is a tea kiosk below this tree. We suspect that the owner of the kiosk was vexed because of the falling excreta. He might have been instrumental in killing the ancient tree. There were no nests on the dead tree in June 2007.

### 8. Kanhan Heronry, District Nagpur:

This heronry was located on 19th July 2006. RK found 10 nests of Indian Pond Herons on three Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*) trees on the Nagpur-Jabalpur highway in Kanhan town. One pair had red legs and they were found visiting the same nest. These trees also had 10 nests of Cattle Egrets and a solitary nest of House Crows (*Corvus splendens*).

The striking feature was the chicks of Indian Pond Herons were very quiet and did not move much even when the parents arrived with food. RK found a small fish below a nest. On 26th June 2007 also, RK found 10 nests of Indian Pond Herons on two Banyan trees and three eggshells below the trees.

### 9. Kandri village Heronry, Kanhan, District Nagpur:

This heronry was also located on 19th July 2006. There were around 25 nests of Cattle Egrets on a single Tamarind tree. On 26th June 2007 there were around the same number of nests as counted in 2006. Also three more nests of Cattle Egrets were seen on a Banyan tree near the Tamarind tree. Some nests were being built and three eggshells were found below the tree.

### 10. C.P Foundry Heronry, Nagpur:

RK located this heronry on 19th July 2006. There were around 40 nests of Cattle Egrets on a single tree behind Lord Hanuman temple, in front of the main gate of C.P. Foundry on Jabalpur Highway. Inside the Foundry premises, RK counted around 34 nests of Indian Pond Herons. These nests were on various trees like Subabul (*Leucaena leucocephala*) (6), Ber (*Zizyphus spp.*)(5), Mango (*Mangifera indica) (8),* Umbar (*Ficus glomerata) (4),* Jamun (*Eugenia jambolana)* (5+2) and an unidentified tree (4). The unidentified tree also had 10 nests of Cattle Egrets in it. All the nests were at heights ranging between 20 and 30 feet from the ground.

### 11. Sakkardara Heronry, Nagpur:

RK found this heronry of Cattle Egrets on 4th June 2005 near Chhota Tajbagh dargah. There were approximately 45 nests of Cattle Egrets on a single Tamarind tree. In the monsoon of 2006 the heronry shifted to two Tamarind trees behind the dargah. On 13th July 2007, RK visited the site. There were no active nests on any of those trees.

### 12. Heronry at VNIT, Nagpur:

Dr. Tarique Sani (pers. com.) located a heronry of around 50 nests of Cattle Egrets in June 2005 near VNIT campus, in Nagpur city. RK visited the heronry and found that it was on a giant Tamarind tree.

### 13. Heronry at Shivangaon, Nagpur:

This small heronry was located in the monsoon of 2000 (AP). It had only three nests of Black-headed Ibises (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*).

### 14. Tarodi (Bujurg) Heronry:

There were around 100 nests of Cattle Egrets on Tamarind trees in June 2000 (AP). On 10th July 2007 RK visited the village and found only 9 nests of Indian Pond Herons and 2 nests of Cattle Egrets. However, there was a flock of 65 Cattle Egrets with breeding plumage and 21 without breeding plumage foraging with a herd of cattle.

## HERONRY IN BHANDARA DISTRICT:

### Heronry at Pauni :

RK located this heronry on 31st July 2006 by following the movements of Little Cormorants on a bicycle. This heronry was on three Tamarind trees on the bank of a small tank near the historical fort. First tree had nests of Indian Pond Heron (no. of nests, n=10), Intermediate Egrets (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) (n=10), Little Cormorants (n=13-14) and Cattle Egrets (n=9). Second tree had nests of Indian Pond Heron (n=5), Intermediate Egrets (n=10) and Cattle Egrets (n=5). Third tree had nests of Intermediate Egrets (n=10), Little Cormorants (n=3) and Cattle Egrets (n=5). The adult birds were seen feeding the chicks. Little Cormorants were seen bringing food from Kurala tank near the old Bus Stop.

## HERONRY IN AMRAVATI DISTRICT:

### Wadali Garden Heronry, Amravati:

RK found this heronry on 25th August 2003 in the Wadali Garden in Amravati city. There were 16 nests of Indian Pond Herons on Ashoka (*Polyalthia longifolia*) trees. There were one to three chicks on the nests. Parents were seen feeding actively. Nests were 20-25 feet above the ground. The garden keeper told RK that 10-12 chicks had fallen and died because of wind. The geographical location of Amravati city is $20^{0}54'$N and $77^{0}45'$E.

## HERONRY IN CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT:

### Kokwada Heronry :

A heronry of Cattle Egrets and Intermediate Egrets was located (RK) in two Tamarind trees in Kokwada (Mankar) village, Taluq Bhadravati, District Chandrapur. Most of the chicks had fledged and they were seen feeding in paddy fields. The farmers informed that the birds nested there every year in the same trees.

### Acknowledgments:

Thanks to Mr. Ramesh Ladkhedkar, Dr. Tarique and Mrs. Swati Sani (of nagpurbirds.org), Mr. M.S.R. Shaad, Mr. Parag Sawji, Mr. Shailendra Chaudahary and Dr. Ravi Waikar for accompanying us during the visits to the heronries. Thanks to Mr. Gopalrao Thosar (Honorary Wildlife Warden, Nagpur) for the help in obtaining permission to enter the Central Jail premises. Thanks to Police Commissioner (Jails) Nagpur for giving permission to study the birds in their premises.

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# Birds of Tumakuru Amanikere Wetland

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## Introduction

Tumakuru district has a large network of wetlands and Tumakuru town environs itself has many, like the Tumakuru Amanikere, Shettihalli kere and Upparhalli kere. According to the ***Tumkur District Planning Map*** of the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation of the Dept. of Science and Technology, there are 1542 man-made wetlands (popularly referred to as tanks) serving the purpose of irrigation in the district.

Tumkaru Amanikere is among the oldest man-made irrigation wetlands of Karnataka. The records of Chandramouleshwari temple near T. Begur in south Karnataka mention it as being constructed in 1130 AD by the Chola king, Rajendra Chola. There are also records of the wetland being cleaned by the *Palegars* (Chieftains) of Gubbi Hoshalli and the Ganga – Gowri prayers being offered. Later on, the Mysore rulers maintained it efficiently.

## Geography:

With the hills of Devarayanadurga state forest as backdrop, Tumakuru Amanikere is picturesquely located in the heart of Tumkauru town. The geographical co-ordinates are 77° 07' E and 13° 21' N. The average altitude is 785 meters above sea level.

## Area and uses:

The current records of Minor irrigation department, Government of Karnataka, the owner of this land, show the area as 504 acres, although the Mysore Gazetteer of 1930 mentions the wetland as having an area of 835 acres. The total catchment area of this wetland is 35 sq. km and includes the western parts of Devarayanadurga state forest. The wetland provides irrigation water to an area (*atchkat*) of 750 acres, where even today crops like Paddy, different vegetables, coconut and areca are grown. Apart from this the wetland recharges the ground water of surrounding regions.

## Climate:

Rainfall: Tumakuru Taluk receives an average annual rainfall of 688m. The temperature ranges from a maximum of 38 degrees Centigrade in summer to a minimum of 11 degrees Centigrade in winter.

## Birdlife:

A total of 129 species of birds belonging to 50 families have been recorded in this lake. This lake is very important because it is a breeding ground for 49 bird species and a feeding/resting place for 29 migratory ones. Some of the migratory birds come from far away regions of Siberia, Europe, North and Central Asia, while some of them are local migrants coming from different parts of Karnataka and Peninsular India. Many of the birds using this wetland are endangered and hence their habitat should be protected.

## About this paper:

My residence is a stone throw from this wetland. I have been using this tank to identify birds since I began recording birds, in early 1990s. It is a part of the annual mid-winter Asian Waterfowl Census conducted in Tumkur District by members of Wildlife Aware Nature Club (WANC) since 1990, of which I am regular participant. I have been a member of the local committees formed to study and conserve the tank. I have also carried out two Government-aided case studies on it since 2001. Hence, I have been able to spend a decent amount of time observing and recording its fauna for nearly two decades now.

The following is the checklist of birds of Tumkur Amanikere. The common names follow the standardised list of Manakadan. R,. and A. Pittie. 2003. *Standardised common and scientific names of the birds of the Indian Subcontinent.* The number in brackets is the Ripley's number as mentioned in Ali.S. and Dillon Ripley.S., 1989. ***Compact Handguide to the Birds of India and Pakistan*** *together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*., 2nd Edition, OUP 1989.

### 1. Family: Podicipedidae – Grebes

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Little Grebe (5) | *Tachybaptus ruficollis* | Br |

### 2. Family: Pelecanidae

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | * Spot-billed Pelican (21) VD | *Pelecanus philippensis* | LM |

### 3. Family: Phalacrocoracidae - Cormorants

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Great Cormorant (26) | *Phalacrocorax carbo* | LM |
| 4 | Indian Shag (27) | *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* | LM |
| 5 | Little Cormorant (28) | *Phalacrocorax niger* | NBr |

### 4. Family: Darters: Anhingidae

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Darter (29) NT | *Anhinga melanogaster* | LM |

### 5. Family: Ardeidae- Herons, Egrets & Bitterns

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Grey Heron (35-36) | *Ardea cinerea* | NBr |
| 8 | Purple Heron (37-37a) | *Ardea purpurea* | LM |
| 9 | Indian Pond-Heron (42) | *Ardeola grayii* | Br |
| 10 | Cattle Egret (44) | *Bubulcus ibis* | Br |
| 11 | Large Egret (45-46) | *Casmerodius albus* | NBr |
| 12 | Median Egret (47, 48) | *Mesophoyx intermedia* | NBr |
| 13 | Little Egret (49) | *Egretta garzetta* | NBr |
| 14 | Black-crowned Night-Heron (52) | *Nycticorax nycticorax* | Br |

### Order: Ciconiiformes

### 6. Family: Ciconiidae - Storks

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Painted Stork (60) NT | *Mycteria leucocephala* | LM |
| 16 | Asian Openbill-Stork (61) | *Anastomus oscitans* | LM |
| 17 | White-necked Stork (62) | *Ciconia episcopus* | LM |

### 7. Family: Threskiornithidae - Ibises & Spoonbills

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Oriental White Ibis (69) NT | *Threskiornis melanocephalus* | LM |
| 19 | Black Ibis (70) | *Pseudibis papillosa* | LM |
| 20 | Eurasian Spoonbill (72) | *Platalea leucorodia* | LM |

### Order: Anseriformes

### 8. Family: Anatidae - Swans, Geese & Ducks

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Lesser Whistling-Duck (88) | *Dendrocygna javanica* | LM |
| 22 | Northern Pintail (93) | *Anas acuta* | M |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 23 Common Teal (94) | *Anas crecca* | M |
| 24 Spot-billed Duck (97-99) | *Anas poecilorhyncha* | LM |
| 25 Common Pochard (108) | *Anas strepera* | M |
| 26 Cotton Teal | *Anas penelope* | Br |

### 9. Family: Accipitridae - Hawks, Eagles, Buzzards, Old World Vultures, Kites, Harriers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27 Black-shouldered Kite (124) | *Elanus caeruleus* | LM |
| 28 Black Kite (132-134) | *Milvus migrans govinda* | Br |
| 29 Brahminy Kite (135) | *Haliastur indus* | Br |
| 30 * Shikra (137-140) | *Accipiter badius* | NBr |
| 31 GreaterGrey-headed Fish-Eagle (175-176) NT | *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* | M |
| 32 * Long-billed Vulture (182) CR | *Gyps indicus* | LM |
| 33 Ind. White-back. Vulture (185) CR | *Gyps bengalensis* | LM |
| 34 Egyptian Vulture (186-187) | *Neophron percnopterus* | LM |
| 35 Western Marsh-Harrier (193) | *Circus aeruginosus* | M |
| 36 * Crested Serpent-Eagle (196) | *Spilornis cheela* | LM |

### 10. Family: Pandionidae - Osprey (previously part of Accipitridae)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 37 Osprey (203) | *Pandion haliaetus* | M |

### Order: Galliformes

### 11. Family: Phasianidae - Pheasants, Partridges, Quails

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 38 Grey Francolin (244-246) | *Francolinus pondicerianus* | NBr |

### Order: Gruiformes

### 12. Family: Rallidae - Rails, Crakes, Moorhens, Coots

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 39 White-breasted Waterhen (343) | *Amaurornis phoenicurus* | Br |
| 40 Common Moorhen (347-347a) | *Gallinula chloropus* | Br |
| 41 Purple Moorhen (348-349) | *Porphyrio porphyrio* | Br |
| 42 Common Coot (350) | *Fulica atra* | Br |

### 13. Family: Jacanidae – Jacanas

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 43 Pheasant-tailed Jacana (358) | *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* | Br |
| 44 Bronze-winged Jacana (359) | *Metopidius indicus* | Br |

### 14. Family: Recurvirostridae – Stilts, Avocets

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 45 Black-winged Stilt (430-431) | *Himantopus himantopus* | M |

### 15. Family: Glareolidae

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 46 Small Pratincole (444) | *Glareola lactea* | M |

### 16. Family: Charadriidae – Lapwings, Plovers, Sandpipers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 47 Red-wattled Lapwing (366-368) | *Vanellus indicus* | Br |
| 48 Little Ringed Plover (379-380) | *Charadrius dubius* | M |

### 17. Family: Scolopacidae: Sandpipers, Stints, Snipes, Godwits & Curlews

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 49 Wood Sandpiper (398) | *Tringa glareola* | M |
| 50 Common Sandpiper (401) | *Tringa hypoleucos* *(Actitis hypoleucos )* | M |
| 51 Little Stint (416) | *Gallinago stenura* | M |

### 18. Family: Laridae - Gulls, Terns & Noddies

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 52 River Tern (463) | *Sterna aurantia* | LM |

### 19. Family: Columbidae

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 53 Blue Rock Pigeon (516-517) | *Columba livia* | Br |
| 54 Eurasian Collared-Dove (534) | *Streptopelia decaocto* | NBr |
| 55 Little Brown Dove (541) | *Streptopelia senegalensis* | Br |

### 20. Family: Psittacidae - Parakeets & Hanging-Parrots

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 56 Rose-ringed Parakeet (549-550) | *Psittacula krameri* | Br |

### 21. Family: Cuculidae – Cuckoos

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 57 Pied Crested Cuckoo (570-571) | *Oxylophus jacobinus* | LM |
| 58 Greater Coucal (600-602) | *Centropus sinensis* | NBr |
| 59 Brainfever Bird (573-574) | *Cuculus varius* | LM |
| 60 Asian Koel (590-592) | *Eudynamys scolopacea* | Br |

### 22. Family: Tytonidae-Barn Owls

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 61 Barn Owl (606-607) | *Tyto alba* | Br |

### 23. Family: Strigidae

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 62 Spotted Owlet (650-652) | *Athene brama* | Br |

### 24. Family: Apodidae - Swifts

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 63 House Swift (702-706) | *Apus affinis* | LM |
| 64 “ Asian Palm-Swift (707-708) | *Cypsiurus balasiensis* | LM |

### 25. Family: Alcedinidae – Kingfishers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 65 Lesser Pied Kingfisher (719) | *Ceryle rudis* | Br |
| 66 Small Blue Kingfisher (722-724) | *Alcedo atthis* | Br |
| 67 White-breasted Kingfisher (735) | *Halcyon smyrnensis* | Br |

### 26. Family: Meropidae – Bee eaters

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 68 Blue-tailed Bee-eater (748) | *Merops philippinus* | LM |
| 69 Small Bee-eater (749-752) | *Merops orientalis* | Br |

### 27. Family: Coraciidae

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 70 Indian Roller (755-757) | *Coracias benghalensis* | LM |

### 28. Family: Upupidae - Hoopoes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 71 Common Hoopoe (763-766) | *Upupa epops* | Br |

### 29. Family: Pittidae - Pittas

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 72 Indian Pitta (867) | *Pitta brachyura* | M |

### 30. Family: Capitonidae (Megalaimidae) - Barbets \

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 73 White-cheeked Barbet (785) | *Megalaima viridis* | Br |
| 74 Coppersmith Barbet (792) | *Megalaima haemacephala* | Br |

### 31. Family: Picidae – Woodpeckers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 75 Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker (818-823) | *Dinopium benghalense* | NBr |

### 32. Family: Alaudidae

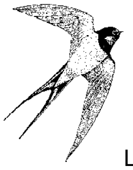
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 76 Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark (878) | *Eremopterix grisea* | LM |
| 77 Eastern Skylark (904-909) | *Alauda gulgula* | LM |

### 33. Family: Hirundinidae - Swallows, Martins

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 78 Dusky Crag-Martin (914) | *Hirundo concolor* | M |
| 79 Wire-tailed Swallow (921) | *Hirundo smithii* | M |
| 80 Red-rumped Swallow (923-928) | *Hirundo daurica* | M |

### 34. Family: Laniidae - Shrikes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 81 Bay-backed Shrike (939-940) | *Lanius vittatus* | M |
| 82 Long-tailed Shrike | *Lanius schach* | LM |



### 35. Family: Oriolidae- Orioles

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 83 Eurasian Golden Oriole (952) | *Oriolus oriolus* | LM |

### 36. Family: Dicruridae- Drongos

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 84 Black Drongo (962-964) | *Dicrurus macrocercus* *(D. adsimilis)* | Br |
| 85 Ashy Drongo (965-966b) | *Dicrurus leucophaeus* | M |

### 37. Family: Artamidae: Swallow shrikes/wood swallows

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 86 Ashy Woodswallow (982) | *Artamus fuscus* | LM |

### 8. Family: Sturnidae - Starlings, Mynas

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 87 Grey-headed Starling (987-989) | *Sturnus malabaricus* | LM |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 88 Brahminy Starling (994) | *Sturnus pagodarum* | Br |
| 89 Common Myna (1006-1007) | *Acridotheres tristis* | Br |
| 90 Jungle Myna (1009-1011) | *Acridotheres fuscus* | LM |
| 91 Rosy Pastor (996) | *Sturnus roseus* | M |

### 39. Family: Corvidae

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 92 House Crow (1048-1051) | *Corvus splendens* | Br |
| 93 Jungle Crow (1054-1057) | *Corvus macrorhynchos* | Br |

### 40. Family: Campephagidae: Cuckoo-Shrikes and Minivets

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 94 Common Woodshrike (1069) | *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* | LM |

### 41. IRENIDAKE – Leafbirds, Ioras

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 95 Common Iora (1097-1101) | *Aegithina tiphia* | LM |

### 42. Family: Irenidae - Bluebirds, Leafbirds

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 96 Jerdon's chloropsis | *Chloropsis cochinchinensis* | LM |

### 43. Family: Pycnonotidae – Bulbuls

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 97 Red-whiskered Bulbul (1118) | *Pycnonotus jocosus* | Br |
| 98 Red-vented Bulbul (1126-1132) | *Pycnonotus cafer* | Br |
| 99 White-browed Bulbul (1138-39) | *Pycnonotus luteolus* | NBr |

### 44. Family: Muscicapidae

#### Subfamily: Timaliinae - Babblers, Laughingthrushes, Babaxes, Barwings, Yuhinas

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 100 Jungle Babbler (1261-1265) | *Turdoides striatus* | LM |
| 101 White-headed Babbler (1267) | *Turdoides affinis* | NBr |

#### Sub family: Muscicapinae - Flycatchers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 102 Asian Brown Flycatcher (1407) | *Muscicapa dauurica (M. latirostris)* | M |

#### Subfamily: Sylviinae - Goldcrest, Prinias, Tesias, Warblers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 103 Plain Prinia (1510-1514) | *Prinia subflava / Prinia inornata* | Br |
| 104 Ashy Prinia (1515-1518) | *Prinia socialis* | Br |
| 105 Common Tailorbird (1535-1539) | *Orthotomus sutorius* | Br |
| 106 Blyth's Reed-Warbler (1556) | *Acrocephalus dumetorum* | M |
| 107 Com. Lesser Whitethroat (1567) | *Sylvia curruca* | M |
| 108 Bluethroat (1644-1646a) | *Luscinia svecica* | M |

#### Sub-family: Monarchinae: Monarch-Flycatchers & Paradise-Flycatchers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 109 Oriental Magpie-Robin (1661-64) | *Copsychus saularis* | Br |
| 110 Black Redstart (1671-1672) | *Phoenicurus ochruros* | M |
| 111 Pied Bushchat (1700-1703) | *Saxicola caprata* | LM |
| 112 Indian Robin (1717-1721) | *Saxicoloides fulicata* | Br |

### 45. PARIDAE – Tits

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 113 Great Tit (1790-1797) | *Parus major* | |

### 46. Family: Motacillidae- Pipits, Wagtails

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 114 " Paddyfield Pipit (1858-1860) | *Anthus rufulus* | M |
| 115 Yellow Wagtail (1875-1880) | *Motacilla flava* | M |
| 116 Grey Wagtail | *Motacilla cinerea* | M |
| 117 Large Pied Wagtail (1891) | *Motacilla maderaspatensis* | M |
| 118 White Wagtail | *Motacilla alba* | M |

### 47. Family: Dicaeidae- Flower peckers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 119 Tickell's Flowerpecker (1899) | *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* | Br |

### 48. Family: Nectariniidae – Sunbirds

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 120 Purple-rumped Sunbird (1907) | *Nectarinia zeylonica* | Br |
| 121 Purple Sunbird (1916-1918) | *Nectarinia asiatica* | Br |

### 49. Family: Zosteropidae - White eyes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 122 Oriental White-eye (1933-1936) | *Zosterops palpebrosus* | L M |

### 50. Family: Ploceidae - Sparrows, Wagtails, Pipits, Accentors, Weavers

#### *Subfamily: Passerinae*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 123 House Sparrow (1938-1939a) | *Passer domesticus* | Br |

#### *Subfamily: Ploceinae - Weavers*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 124 Baya Weaver (1957-1959) | *Ploceus philippinus* | Br |

#### Subfamily: Estrildinae - Munias (Estrildid Finches)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 125 Red Munia (1964) | *Estrilda amandava* | Br |
| 126 White-rumped Munia (1967) | *Lonchura striata* | Br |
| 127 White-throated Munia (1966) | *Lonchura malabarica* | Br |
| 128 Spotted Munia (1974-1975) | *Lonchura punctulata* | Br |
| 129 Black-headed Munia (1976-78) | *Lonchura malacca* | Br |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Br** - Birds breeding within the lake or in the trees/man made structures adjoining lake boundaries | **49** |
| **NBr -** Non breeding resident | **12** |
| **LM** - Local migrants from neighboring regions / districts. | **39** |
| **M** – Migrants from other countries | **29** |
| | **129** |

### Other fauna:

Apart from birds, the wetland is home to 24 species of butterflies belonging to 6 families, 12 species of spiders, 6 species of mammals including the rare Slender Loris, 5 species of frogs and 2 species of toads, 3 lizards species, 1 skink species, 12 snake species, 3 species of tortoises and 5 different species of fish.

### Threats:

The story of Tumakuru Amanikere is similar to the thousands of other wetlands located in and around the cities of India which are ever expanding. Many of the wetlands in Tumakuru town like *Ballenkatte* and *Alasetty Kere* near Kunigal gate have been filled up and exist no more. Likewise, even Tumakuru Amanikere has been under constant threat of elected representatives of Tumakuru town who want to fill the wetland for commercial purposes. But due to the constant pressure from the City's nature lovers, the wetland is secure against these threats till now.

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# Short note on first reporting of Birds in Sitamata Sanctuary

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The name Sitamata Sanctuary is coined after the name of Sitamata temple which is situated in the very heart of the Sanctuary. It is Located in the civil districts of Chittorgarh and Udaipur in southwest region of Rajasthan State. This sanctuary is having an area of 422.95 square kilometers. It is situated between 74 degree 25 minutes and 74 degree 40 minutes east longitudes; and 24 degree 04 minutes and 24 degrees 23 minutes North latitudes (See map on back cover page). This area is very important from zoogeographical point of view as it has the confluence of three major geological formations namely the Aravallis, the Vindhyan and the Malwa Plateau. It is also the North West limit of Teak (*Tectona grandis*) forests. Due to this geological peculiarity, there are a number of peculiar geographical features in the Sanctuary resulting into a variety of flora and fauna inhabiting this area.

The forest type as per Champion and Seth's classification is II Dry Tropical Forests which is further divided into Sub Group 5A and Sub Group 5B. The dominant tree species are Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Dhawra (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Gurjan (*Lannea coromandelica*), Salar (*Boswellia serrata*), Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), Dhak (*Butea monosperma*), Sadar (*Terminalia tomentosa*). The associated species are Kalam (*Mitragyna parviflora*), Karaya (*Sterculia urens*), Khair (*Acacia catechu*), Kohra (*Terminalia arjuna*), Harar (*Terminalia chebula*), Jamun (*Syzygium cumini*), Bahera (*Terminalia ballerica*) etc. Bans (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) grows abundantly in the under storey. The under growth is represented by Marorphali (*Helicteris isora*), Dudhi (*Cryptolepis buchanani*), Karonda (*Carrissa carandas*), Kali Siali (*Grewia flavescence*) etc. The grasses are chiefly represented by Bhangta (*Apluda mutica*), Gundal (*Themeda quadrivalvis*), Soorwala (*Heteropogon contortus*), Gunderi (*Cymbopogon jwarancusa*).

The forest of the sanctuary is interspersed with agricultural fields and the tribal settlements presenting a typical honey combed situation. The agricultural activities coupled with heavy felling, grazing and lopping pressure of domestic livestock is posing a great threat to the conservation efforts of this pristine habitat, threatening the very existence of flora and fauna of the area. The incidences of fire in many areas of the Sanctuary are another threat to sanctuary. Along the river Jakham, Karmoi, Sitamata and different streams which flow through the Sanctuary the habitat is different due to availability of moisture. So the vegetation is riparian and wildlife in these areas is also different and peculiar. As per Management Plan of the Sitamata Sanctuary prepared by the Forest Department for the period from 2003-04 to 2012-13 a checklist of 120 birds including both water and terrestrial has already been made. During the past one year I have spotted and photographed few birds which are uncommon, not only to this area but to Rajasthan also. The list of these birds is as follows.

### White-throated Ground Thrush (*Zoothera citrina caynotus*) (Cover Pics. 2 & 4)

It was on June 27, 2006, that I spotted a White Throated Ground Thrush, flitting from one branch to another in the dense canopy of this riparian area just 500 meters away from the Sitamata temple. This was a new bird for Rajasthan. I could not visit that place again, since the area had been isolated due heavy rains and consequent overflowing of the streams. As soon as the flood waters receded, I visited this area, but could not locate this species. On July 1st, 2007 when I was going to Sitamata for data collection for my research, I saw a bird flying from a branch of Mahua (*Madhuca indica*) and landing amid the thick canopy of Sadar (*Terminalia tomentosa*), two kilometers ahead of Sitamata temple. We stopped our vehicle and scanned the canopy to spot and identify the bird.

Within a few minutes, my fellow bird watcher Mr. Devender Mistri located the bird and to our pleasant surprise, it was a white-throated Ground Thrush. I was very happy to see this bird again after one year, hardly a kilometer and half away from the spot of where I had spotted it first. I took some photographs of the bird and looked around for its companions, but could not sight any. Later we proceeded further to look for other birds in the moist and dense forest patch along the stream. After an hour and half of birding and photography, I suddenly noticed three more thrushes on the ground adjacent to the stream having large trees of Mahua, Sadar, Bahera, Mango, Tendu etc. Light was limited due to the thick canopy, but two of the thrushes which were foraging amid the litter were clearly visible. When we observed closely with our binoculars, I noticed that one of them was molting.

Some of the feathers from the head and cheek region werealready lost. The bird was preening frequently. It then went to a bush to feed on some green berries and flew to a nearby bush. Then it started calling. It was a very faint whistling call. Four more thrushes were sighted by Devender Mistri about 200 meters away from this area, when I was busy observing the nest of Black napped monarch. It seemed that probably this area is a breeding ground for the thrushes.

### Breeding of Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher (*Hypothymis azurea*) (Cover Pics. 1 & 6)

On 17thJune, 2007 we were in the Sitamata Sanctuary with Devender Mistri. I was searching for the Jungle Owlet which had just taken off from the branch of a mango tree. It was a clear sunny day; yet the light inside the canopy was not sufficient for photography. Devender came to me and described a bird he had just seen which according to him was the size of a Grey-headed Flycatcher; blue in color with black spot on the head region. I could not believe that he had seen a Black-naped Monarch. For a few minutes we tried to locate it but in vain. Then we went to Sitabari (Valmik Ashram area). It is a much visited area, rather a picnic spot owing to the presence of a perennial stream. More than a dozen villagers and other visitors were bathing in the anicut constructed in the stream and some were even seen washing their clothes. Plastic bags and other non biodegradable articles were littered carelessly; a common sight at all our picnic spots. Nearby was the nest of a Stork-billed Kingfisher, excavated on a vertically raised bank of the stream. The kingfisher was seen feeding its chick. Suddenly I saw two small blue birds flitting from one bush to the other. One of the birds was having a black spot on the nape. I aimed my camera at the bird but it startled the pair. It was exactly the same bird which was described by Devender an hour earlier. It was a new bird in the area, the Black-naped Monarch. On the following day I visited the area once again and I was successful in taking the photographs of both the male and the female. They were seen flitting between the branches of mango and banyan trees.

On 1st of July, 2007 we were in the same area of Sitamata Sanctuary. I was busy searching for the monarchs in the same area where three thrushes had been observed by us, when Devender came to me and told that they have finally found the nest of the Black-naped Monarch. It was barely besides the stream of Sitamata, on the extremity of a branch of a mango tree. It was a small cup shaped nest about an inch and half in diameter, built on the fork of two small branches. The tree was amid a dense grove with very little light penetrating the crown. The male Monarch was frequently seen bringing nesting materials in its beak. The nest was around 18 to 20 feet above the ground. The nest was made of grasses and cobweb .Both the male and the female were coming to the nest repeatedly with tiny grasses and other nesting materials. Now this was a proof that the Sitamata Sanctuary is the breeding ground of black-napped monarch.

I again visited the same spot twice; on 15th and 20th of July 2007. The parents were seen incubating the eggs by rotation. On 30th of July 2007, I was able to see two chicks in the nest which were being fed by both the parents. In just an hour the parents had visited the nest twelve times. During the observation period a Stork-billed Kingfisher was chased by the male Monarch, when the former tried to perch on the branch containing the nest.

**Black-hooded Oriole *(Oriolus xanthornus)* (Cover Pic. 7)**
Black-hooded Orioles are very common bird in Sitamata Sanctuary, but can be seen only in the dense groves of evergreen trees in Sitamata and Valmik ashram areas. I have recorded this bird during almost every visit to the area around the Sitamata temple. This bird was never encountered in the dry teak forest or other open areas.

**Chestnut-tailed Starling *(Sturnus malabaricus)* (Cover Pic. 3)**
It is another very common bird in the Sitamata Sanctuary. It is regularly reported from the Punga Talab anicut area where the forest area is mainly dominated by Teak *(Tectona grandis),* Gurjan *(Lannea coramendelica),* Tendu *(Diospyros melanoxylon),* Dharwa *(Anogeissus latifolia)* etc.

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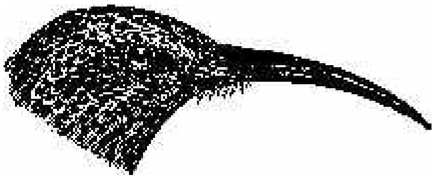
*Will be concluded in the next issue*



# Some aspects of the Breeding Biology of the Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*

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**Abstract:** The Purple Sunbird, *Nectarinia asiatica* is found abundantly in New Delhi, India. It presents some unique features in its breeding biology. This paper deals with some aspects of its breeding which includes nest construction, incubation and parental care.

**Key words:** Nest, incubation, parental care.

**Methodology:** For Studying the breeding biology of Purple Sunbirds 10 of their nests were selected for observation in New Delhi, India. A pair of prismatic binoculars (8X30), torches and search lights were used for the study. Observations were made and recorded with respect to nest construction, eggs, clutch size, incubation and parental care between March and April 2007.

## Results

**Site selection.** Both the male and female Purple Sunbirds took part in the selection of nesting sites. They visited the sites several times a day for three days before embarking on nest construction. They chose a site that was 6-8 feet high (mean 7 feet). Many of the observed nests were constructed away from the trees, hanging from electricity wires or doorways. Purple Sunbirds breed during the months of March, April and May.

**Nest construction:** Though both the birds were involved in site selection only the female took part in nest construction. It took her 10-11 days (mean 10.5 days) to construct the nest. The female used dry plant materials including small twigs, dry grass and leaves to construct an oval shaped nest that had a small opening towards the anterior end. A few small pieces of paper were plastered at the base of the nest, that could be attributed to scarcity of natural material for nest construction. The female actively engaged in nest construction during day time. During evening and night it did not venture near the nest. It was observed that the male Purple Sunbird did not help in material collection for constructing the nest. The female did not begin to sit in the nest till it was complete. However, when the nest was almost complete the female sat in the nest several times for a few minutes, perhaps to check the strength of the nest. The nest was 2-3 inch deep (mean 2.6 inch). The location of the entrance and the depth of the nest provided security to the eggs and fledglings since they largely remained hidden within the oval shaped nest. The female Purple Sunbird started constructing the entrance of the nest a few days after starting the nest construction. After the nest had been constructed it further strengthened the entrance by adding dry twigs and other plant materials around it to make the region of nest around the entrance strong and firm.

Copulation took place outside the nesting area and a single egg or two eggs were laid. However after laying the eggs, the bird did not immediately begin to incubate the eggs. It was quite difficult to observe the eggs, largely due to the shape of the nest and location of the entrance.

The eggs were small and oval shaped. The clutch size was one or two eggs (mean 1.4). Each egg was 3-3.5 cm long and 2-2.4cm wide. It was whitish in colour. At the blunt-end there were several light grey marks that were significantly absent at the pointed end. During the short period of absence after laying the eggs, the male and female did nothing to protect the nest from predators.

**Incubation:** The female began incubating the eggs soon after the clutch was complete. The incubation period in Purple Sunbird was 11-12 days (mean 11.4 days). The incubation duties were performed solely by the female Purple Sunbird. It did go out of the nest intermittently for feeding. The male did not venture near the nest during the incubation period.

The sequence of the female sunbird entering the nest and resuming incubation was observed. The bird first entered the nest, made some movements inside and remained hidden for a few seconds. Then it put out its beak and head from the entrance of the nest and began to incubate the eggs.

**Parental care:** Parental care started soon after the eggs hatched. The egg shells were removed soon after hatching to maintain sanitation. The hatchlings were young, blind, fleshy and helpless. They were fed by the female. It was observed that the male seldom approached the nest. The male remained conspicuous by its absence. During the night female sat in the nest for protecting the young ones in the same posture as she did during incubation. During the early days of parental care the females were observed picking the nearby worms to feed the young ones. After two days of hatching the fledglings were observed raising their heads the moment the nest was disturbed. However, from the third day onwards the female did not sit inside or visit the nest after sunset. After five days the fledglings learnt to distinguish between the various external factors and raised their heads with open mouths only when the female approached the nest. The fledglings remained in the nest for 12 to 13 days. On the final day the fledglings took wings under the careful watch of the female.

It was observed that the Purple Sunbirds never reused their nests or other bird's nests.

**Discussion:** Every bird has its typical breeding period. The birds undergo behavioural and physiological changes along with changes in the size of the gonads. Almost all birds build nests which is a characteristic expression of parental care. The nesting habits and type of the nest a bird builds are inherited traits. Nest building is typically an instinctive behaviour. The rock pigeon *Columbia livia* and Indian ring dove *Streptopelia decaocto* are known as haphazard nest builders. However, the Red-whiskered bulbul, *Pycnonotus jocosus* builds a hemispherical or cup shaped nest (Mazumdar, 2006). In bulbul both the male and female are involved in nest construction by placing sticks in a criss-cross manner followed by the addition of dry leaves, grass, twigs etc. (Baker, 1922). However in the present study only the female took part in nest construction. Weaver birds, *Ploceus philippinus* use mud, dung and faeces to plaster their nests in order to prevent it from being blown away by wind (Jerdon, 1863). Another opinion states that mud and dung only strengthen the architecture of the nest in places of stress (Davis, 1973). The nest of the weaver bird has a tube like opening to prevent possible attacks by predators. Davis (1971) reported long and thin walled entrances of nest to protect eggs from snakes. Ali and Ripley (1974) reported the entrances of weaver bird, *Ploceus megarhynchus*, surrounded by a porch like structure. The abandoned nests of weaver birds were used by house sparrows, *Passer domesticus* (Dhindsa and Toor, 1982). However, the nests in the present study were left unused. The Red-whiskered bulbul started sitting in its incomplete nest unlike the Purple Sunbird that completed the nest first before sitting in it.

Every bird has a definite clutch size. The eggs of the Red-whiskered bulbul had pinkish spots distributed evenly on them (Mazumdar, 2006). However, in the present study the marks were grey and were at the blunt end only. The Purple Sunbird waited for the clutch to be completed before incubating them. However, the Red-whiskered bulbul initiated the process of incubation immediately after laying the first egg itself. In the Red-whiskered bulbul, the incubation duties are shared by both the partners and so is the case in Rock pigeons and Indian ring doves (Mazumdar, 2006). However, most of the incubation is done by female in Red-vented bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* (Dixit, 1963). The incubating female bulbul develops a brood spot that helps in heat transfer (Bailey, 1952). However, the brood spot was absent in the *Nectarinia asiatica.* Most birds including the Indian ring dove, Rock pigeon and Red-whiskered bulbul remove the egg shells after hatching, a fact corroborated in the present study.

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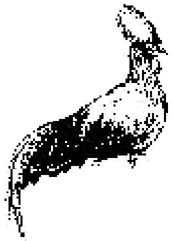

# Bengal's Bird Flu - the Focal Point of Global Concern

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Avian influenza viruses have been found in many species, but are most often found in migratory waterfowl. Wild birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds, have long been a focus of concern for the poultry industry as a source of influenza infection of poultry. Although influenza is most commonly detected in birds that use the major waterfowl flyways, these viruses are found throughout the world. The majority of waterfowl migration takes place within designated geographic areas. Many species other than waterfowl follow the same migratory pathways from their breeding grounds to the wintering grounds and vice versa. Every year a large number of migratory waterfowls and waterbirds migrate from northern parts to wetlands and water bodies across our country.

The recent outbreak of Bird Flu or Avian Influenza H5N1 in West Bengal has become the focal point of global concern. Presently, it is confirmed that chickens and domestic waterfowls of West Bengal are infected by this virus. Since the outbreak, millions of chickens and other domestic fowls have either died of infection or were put to death by non-scientific methods (e.g. killing chickens by twisting their necks and burying them near the virus affected areas or burying live birds). But the government of West Bengal has not been able to tackle the crisis on a war footing. Unfortunately it has lead to the spread of the virus very rapidly from one district to the other. There is also a possibility of the virus getting transmitted from the illegal import of chickens through the porous borders of our neighboring Bangladesh, which is also grappling with the Avian Influenza. At this juncture, organized poultry farming has not yet been affected, but the traditional village backyard poultry farming is seriously affected. The disease seems to be spreading at a time when the wintering birds are preparing to return to their wintering grounds, from the wetlands and waterbodies of West Bengal.

Most parts of the West Bengal are situated in the Gangetic flood plains, which are dotted with many large and small wetlands and water bodies, mostly in rural areas. These wetlands and waterbodies are safe refuges for wintering waterbirds and breeding grounds for resident wild waterbirds. People living in close proximity to the said areas have undertaken backyard poultry farming (both chicken & domestic ducks) for their livelihood. Domestic ducks are not kept separately, but are allowed to mingle with chickens in a common enclosure. Very frequently the domestic ducks forage freely in the wetlands or waterbodies visited by migratory waterfowl. There is a high possibility that domestic ducks get infected by the Avian Influenza from the backyard poultry chickens, because of their close proximity to them and in turn the domestic ducks might be transmitting the virus to the wintering waterfowls and water birds. In due course when the migratory waterfowls and waterbirds begin to leave for their wintering grounds they may carry the virus to the other parts of the globe from this region. Even the locally migratory waterfowl and water birds may possibly transmit the disease from one state to the other. In this manner the entire country's wild birds and poultry birds are prone to be exposed to the Avian Influenza. But unfortunately the State Government has not yet found it crucial to seek the assistance of birdwatchers, ornithologists and bird experts of West Bengal, in tackling this problem. Now large-scale chicken culling is the only option left for the Animal Husbandry and Health Departments of West Bengal, to contain the spread of the dreaded virus. Although the state of West Bengal has a good network of birdwatchers, they are yet to be consulted. Only the birdwatchers can keep an eye on the wild birds for any telltale symptoms of the virus and inform the authorities for timely action; because they are voluntarily engaged in Bird Census and Waterfowl Counts in various parts of the state.

In the last two weeks of January 2008, I made an assessment of the waterfowl and water birds of the various wetlands and water bodies in the central parts of West Bengal including Malda, Murshidabad, North Dinajpur and South Dinajpur districts. Although these districts are seriously affected by the Avian Influenza, the good news is that I could not find any symptoms of Avian Influenza in any wild waterfowl or waterbird till date. Similarly, I could not find any symptoms of Avian Influenza in other wild birds of this region. I am particularly concerned about the birds of the Raiganj Bird Sanctuary of North Dinajpur district and Waterfowls of Farakka Barrage. The Raiganj Bird Sanctuary is the largest Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans)* heronry of India and the Farakka Barrage is the largest wintering migratory habitat in West Bengal, both of which are located between Malda and Murshidabad districts across Ganges river. These two bird habitats are important bird areas of India. At least twenty species of waterfowls visit the Farakka Barrage of which two species are Globally Threatened. After a rapid survey of the Raiganj Bird Sanctuary, I counted only a handful of Asian Openbills which were seen preparing to leave the sanctuary. So, there is little possibility of them catching the Avian Influenza. However waterfowls are still found at the Farakka Barrage. During daytime they stay in the middle of the river Ganges, but at night they forage in the paddy fields of Malda and Murshidabad districts. They also visit inland water bodies for their food. I am afraid that there is a good chance of the waterfowls of Farakka Barrage getting infected by the Avian Influenza from the domestic ducks of the region. Observations on wild birds of Jatradanga Bheel, Bhatiar Bheel, Sagardighi fish pond and Adina Protected Forest of Malda district did not show any symptoms of the deadly virus i.e. the Avian Influenza. Wild birds of Ahiron Wetland, Bhagar Bheel, and Bara Sagardighi of Murshidabad district also seemed to be quite healthy.

The West Bengal government has taken more than three weeks to control the spread of Avian Influenza in the state, but with limited success. The early days of second week of January 2008 saw the reports of thousands of chickens dying due to a mystery disease in Rampurhat block of Bhirbhum district. At the end of that week more chickens were found dead in various parts of the same district. Samples were sent for analysis and the outbreak of the Avian Influenza H5N1 in West Bengal was confirmed on 13th January 2008 from Bhirbhum district. By 15th January the disease had spread to two more districts namely Murshidabad (which is adjacent to Bhirbhum district) and South Dinajpur district in North Bengal. It is really baffling as to how the virus bypassed the Malda district and jumped to South Dinajpur district in North Bengal, which is separated by large distances because of the barrier of river Ganges between Malda (North Bengal) and Murshidabad (South Bengal). However Murshidabad and South Dinajpur districts are located along the Indo-Bangladesh border. On 18th January 2008 the virus spread to two more districts in South Bengal, namely Nadia and Burdwan. The Nadia district is adjacent to Bangladesh and the north-eastern sides of Burdwan are surrounded by Bhirbhum, Murshidabad and Nadia districts. In the meantime, reports of chickens dying due to the viral attack started coming form various parts of the state. On 20th January the Malda district of North Bengal and Bankura district of South Bengal came under the grip of this disease. On 22nd January, Coochbihar and North Dinajpur districts of North Bengal were added to the disease affected list. On the very next day, i.e. 23rd January, Avian Influenza was confirmed in Hoogly district of South Bengal, adjacent to Kolkata. On 25th January the disease began spreading to more districts of South Bengal, namely South 24 Paraganas, Howrah, Medinipur and Purulia. The Howrarh district is very close to Kolkata, which is separated by the Hoogly River. In a very short span, the Avian Influenza has spread to almost all the districts in South Bengal close to the Bangladesh border. Finally, during the last week of January 2008, the Avian Influenza engulfed the entire West Bengal and there is a possibility that the disease may spread its tentacles in the direction of Jharkhand, Bihar and Orissa. Yet the authorities of West Bengal have not pressed for the services of birdwatchers of the State to keep the wild birds under surveillance and to detect in advance the spread of the virus, if any, among the waterfowl and water birds. This not only exhibits the ill-preparedness of the concerned authorities but also endorses their cavalier approach to this serious problem, which could ultimately engulf the entire nation. It should be remembered that the Avian Influenza has a potential to mutate and affect the humans also, if remedial steps are not taken on a war footing. It is high time that the authorities engaged the services of birdwatchers in their efforts to contain this scourge, to save both the birds and the humans.

*According to a recent WHO Report , 224 people have died from bird flu since the virus began affecting poultry stocks in Asia in 2003. (Indonesia 101, Vietnam 40, Egypt 19, China 17, Thailand 17, Turkey 4, Azerbaijan 5, Cambodia 7, Iraq 2, Laos 2, Nigeria 1 Pakistan 1)*

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### ***SIGHTING RECORDS OF FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCKS (Dendrocygna bicolor)***

*A.M.K.BHAROS, B-101, Gayatri Nagar, PO; Shanker Nagar, RAIPUR, CG, 492007.*

The earlier distribution range of the species was wide in the subcontinent and sporadically in many areas. It is possibly a local migrant in parts. (Ali *& Ripley 1987)*. It is known to keep in small flocks and often associates with Lesser Whistling Teals (*Dendrocygna javanica*). It roosts during the day on undisturbed ground or water bodies near its feeding ground and inhabits marshes, flooded paddy fields, shallow lakes, ponds with partly submerged trees and extensive emergent vegetation (*Grimmett & Inskipps 1998)*

The species has been sighted at following locations;

- Kharkhara Reservoir, Rajnandgaon distt, (21° 10‘ N, 81° 03‘ E) Chhattisgarh.

  On 11 07 2004, on the eastern fringes of the reservoir, near outlet canal and amongst the vegetation, eight birds were sighted along with Lesser Whistling Teals and on our closer approach both the species took off, exposing their plumages, thus making the identification easier.

- Amarkantak , Anuppur distt, ( 22° 32‘ N, 80° 32‘ E ), Madhya Pradesh,

  In February 1992, on the edges of small bund built across river Narbada, eight birds were seen resting along with Lesser Whistling Teals. Larger size and plumage led to identification of the species.

- Jogdah Gharial Sanctuary, Son River, Sidhi distt (22° 47‘ - 24°42‘ N, 81°18‘ - 82° 48‘ E) Madhya Pradesh.

  During a visit on 28 12 1991, a large congregation of different water birds was seen, amongst it was a scattered flock of 50 to 60 birds.

None of the above sites have been found illustrated in the map at page 363, (Grimmett *& Inskipps 1998)* indicating the distribution of the species.Thus these sightings suggest extension in their distribution range to the above mentioned locations.

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## SIGHTING RECORDS OF GREYLAG GOOSE (*Anser anser*) FROM MAHARASHTRA,

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Dr. Manohar Khode alongwith birder friend Mr. P. D. Lad had gone to birdwatching on 31st October 1993 at Pandhari reservoir near Warud in Amravati district of Maharashtra. They got a pleasant surprise when they saw a flock of large birds looking somewhat like domestic goose but grey-brown in colour. The size was as big as Barheaded Goose (*Anser indicus*) but they were different in colouration. On comparison with colour plates in the Pictorial Guide (1995) they identified the geese as Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*). In all 11 geese were sighted here. Thereafter a follow-up was kept every year at the Pandhari reservoir in winter. However Greylag Goose was not sighted again. Probably this flock was vagrant.

On 31st December 2006, the authors (RK, AP, GT) visited Shiregaon Bandh reservoir near Navegaon Bandh Sanctuary in Gondia district of Maharashtra. Again we visited Shiregaon Bandh reservoir on 1st January 2007. From the roadside we could see a few Greylag Goose at the far end of the reservoir. Then we visited the backside of the reservoir. We were delighted to see a large flock of around 90-100 Greylag Goose at a distance of 100 meters from us. However the birds were annoyed by our presence and took off with loud nasal '*aang…aang*' calls and landed far off in deep waters.

We must add that on the next day another birdwatcher and nature lover Mr. Bhimsen Patil Dongarwar (pers. com.), sighted around 130 Greylag Geese here. Mr. Bhimsen informed us that in winter 2006 he had seen 71 geese at Itiadoh and 91 geese at the Shiregaon Bandh reservoir.

According to Dr. Salim Ali (1996) the geese are "winter visitors to northern India, uncommon to rare in the south". According to Rasmussen (2005) it is "vagrant farther south, once to Sri Lanka". Humayun Abdulali (1973) did not report this species in the checklist of Maharashtra. D'Abreu (1923, 1935) mentions it as "winter visitor to the Nerbudda" (now Madhya Pradesh). Sighting of Greylag Goose south to Madhya Pradesh is rare, hence these records assume importance. Probably these are the first reports of the sighting of Greylag Goose from Maharashtra State.

### Acknowledgements :

Thanks to Mr. B. Mujumdar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Maharashtra State) for his help during this trip to the Navegaon Bandh. Thanks to Mr. Bhimsen Patil Dongarwar for sharing the information.

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## SHARING A SINGLE HOUSE ROOF CREVICE BY HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*), COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) AND HOUSE SWIFT (*Apus affinis*) FOR NESTING.

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On 3rd August 2006, I shifted my house from ZARS, Mudigere to an independent house at Vidyanagara, Hassan on my transfer. My rented house is located in a residential colony which is about two km from the busy centre of the Hassan city. The two floor house had been constructed with a tile roofed room on the first floor, having a crevice between the RCC roof and tiles. In front of the house there are a few bushy flowering plants. Many birds like the Tailor Bird (*Orthotomus sutorius*), Black-headed Munia (*Lonchura malacca*), Red–Whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*), Grey Tit (*Parus major*), Indian Blue Robin (*Luscinia brunnea*), Purple Sunbird (*Nectarinia asiatica*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) etc., regularly visit these flowering plants.

I being a bird lover, have the habit of keeping an eye on the birds visiting my house and the neighborhood. On 27th September 2006, I saw a House Crow (*Corvus splendens*) menacingly approaching a female House Sparrow which was actually nesting in a crevice between the RCC roof and the tiles. I shooed the crow away and scattered rice grains on the pillar of the gate for the sparrows. From that day onwards I was vigilant and chased predatory birds away from the nesting area. I began placing rice grains on the pillar of the gate everyday at 7.00 am. Initially only one pair of sparrows arrived to feed on the grains. Later after about 90 days, I could count 12 birds of different stages. To my surprise everyday exactly by 7.00 am, they would alight on the pillar of the gate and chirp expectantly. I was so happy to see their increasing numbers, because I have read many articles mentioning that the house sparrows are declining due to the construction of RCC roofed houses. Even today one can see the sparrows arriving to at 7.00 am in front of my house. On 12th April 2007, I saw a pair of Common Mynas hovering over the nest of sparrows. I thought they might be attacking the sparrow hatchlings and therefore, I chased them away by shooing. But an hour later, I observed the Common Myna pair bringing nesting materials. They built a nest next to the sparrow nest. Everyday I was observing the nestlings of both species. But I was unlucky, as I was not present to watch the new generation of the mynas leaving their sweet home to lead an independent life. Nevertheless, the sparrows continued their nesting on the same roof.

Yet another bird, the House Swift was also found nesting on the other side of the same roof crevice. Their call *chirr – chirrr* - attracted my attention and I began watching their activities also.

The strange phenomenon was that the Common Myna, which is an aggressive bird by nature, had adjusted itself with its neighbors. These observations reveal that sparrows are capable of raising their generations with minimum protection and support from us. The way their numbers increased due to my little effort and love is an example of conservation in action.

### SCARCITY OF CARCASSES LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR VULTURE POPULATION DECLINE.

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As far as decline in vulture population is concerned, I do not think that lack of preemptive action is responsible. In my view, changes of life style we are undergoing and professional approach we are adopting are responsible. Though the drug 'Diclofenac' is a major cause for the decline, administering of one medicine to ailing domestic animals itself alone is not responsible for the drastic decline. Greed of human beings to encash and utilize every resource they have, could be responsible. The main cause, in my view for the decline is scarcity of carcasses.

These days carcasses of large animals are not left in the open or abandoned, to facilitate the vultures can feed on them. As far I know, none of the cattle die while in the possession of a livestock owner. Most sick and elderly animals are sent to the slaughter houses. Meat dealers are constantly in touch with livestock owners through their agents and pay them adequately to procure terminally sick and old animals. Vultures are not in a position to feed on the road kills because of incessant movement of vehicles and human activities on and around the roads. Nowadays, there aren't any specific carcass dumping yards for dumping dead animals. Traditionally, vultures used to arrive at the dumping yards to feast at their leisure. And presently the vultures have moved so far from towns that even if some dead animals are left in the open, vultures seldom notice them. Such a constant scarcity of carcasses has forced the vultures to concentrate around panjarapols (cattle-camps), which are the only places where carcasses are available these days!! And here the devil plays its role perfectly and successfully. The drug 'Diclofenac' is a cheap and effective non-steroidal anti inflammatory pain killer. It is very popular drug among registered and unregistered veterinarians. Most of the animals which are left at panjarapols are either aged or sick. Almost all the panjarapols are being managed by Jains and Jivdaya believers. They take care and nurse the animals till their death. In this process vets working at panjarapols freely use the painkiller drug and when ultimately such cattle succumb their carcasses are dumped in the open, where the vultures will be waiting to perform their scavenging duties. Unfortunately vultures are congregated where they are likely to get maximum dose of diclofenac from their food and this has resulted in their mass destruction. The fact that more than 125 deaths occurred in just 15 months at Mahuva (Bhavhagar district, Gujarat) is a conclusive evidence of this despondent fact.

If we want to save the vultures, we ought to start from the point where the cause begins. We have to concentrate our efforts on panjarapols. As the diclofenac is not legally banned, any kind of force to deter its use will not help. We have to take them to confidence and create an awareness about the decline of vultures.

On the other hand if we want to start from the very beginning, we may think of providing carcasses to vultures at the dumping (compose) sites of towns near the places where vultures are usually found. For that we need to do what the meat dealers are doing. Should we not be buying sick and old domestic cattle, take care of them and nurse them with harmless drugs like for example Meloxicam, till they die a natural death? To attract vultures to such carcasses, we will have to start dumping carcasses from areas around panjarpols and allow the vultures to notice the carcasses during their flights.

### BAR-HEADED GEESE (*Anser indicus*) MARKED WITH A NECK BAND AT MONGOLIA SIGHTED IN INDIA.

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At my request, Mr. Aditya Joshi, a young birdwatcher from Nagpur, went to watch and photograph a flock of Barheaded Geese *Anser indicus,* visiting the Paradgoan reservoir in Nagpur district on 13th December 2007. On enlarging the photographic images, we were surprised to note that one particular goose, in a flock of 200 geese, had a yellow neck band. As we discussed the photograph we had no clue about the neck band, till the time the exciting news came.

The email birding groups went gaga over a photo taken by Mr. M. Niranjan, who had photographed a Barheaded Goose with a yellow neck band (no. E6) at Somnathpur in Karnataka. He too had noticed the neck collar only after enlarging the photo image on his computer.

The third photograph came from Mr. Adesh Shivkar, who had photographed a goose with a neck band (no.C6) at Veer dam (near Tondal village), 55km south of Pune on 13th January 2008. This goose was seen foraging with a flock of 44 geese.

Later it was found that a team of scientists led by Mr. Martin Gilbert of the Wildlife Conservation Society, had tagged 50 Barheaded Geese in North Mongolia, besides 30 Whooper Swans and 21 Bean Geese. This work has been carried out as a part of Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS).

We are presently preparing a detailed article for publication in the next issue of Newsletter for Birdwatchers.

***Cover**:* Photographs taken during a study of the Birds in Sitamata Sanctuary. For details and photo captions read the article (page 89-90). *Photographs by* **Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj,** IFS

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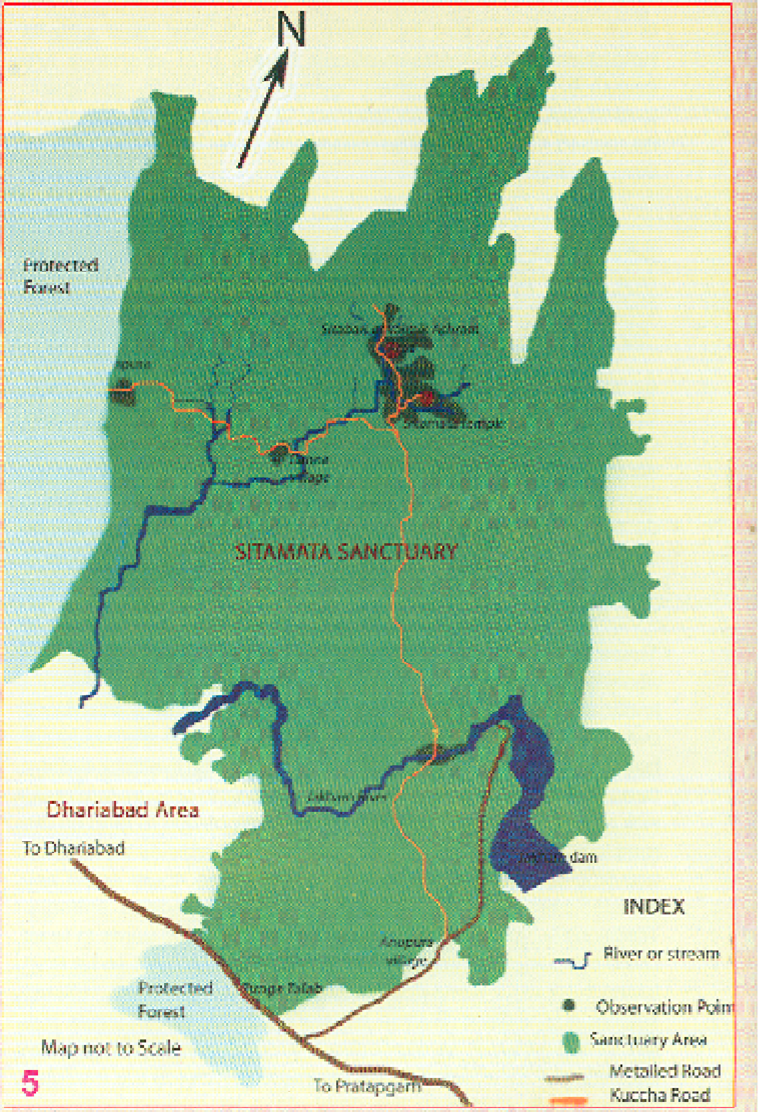

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